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T H E
REGULATION
O F
Diversions.

Design'd principally for the
Benefit of Young Persons.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Henry Chalklin*, Bookseller
in *Taunton*, 1708.

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THE
REGULATION

Divergence

Designed principally for the
use of the young scholars.

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Printed at the Bookbinder
in London.



T H E
Regulation
O F
DIVERSIONS.

TH E forming *Young People* to a solid and serious Temper hath been always accounted a Matter of the last Importance both to themselves, and the Publick, in regard Nature generally keeps the Ply that is first given it, and a wild Undisciplin'd Youth is seldom known to make a religious and useful Man. The Disorders committed in the first Stage of Life are much like a gross Mistake in our Way at first setting out upon a Journey, which carries us so much wider of our End, and is, consequently, the more Difficult to be retriev'd.

On this Account, I should think, whoever offers young Persons to be their Guide, provided he give Security he will not mislead them, may reasonably expect a Welcome. Their Inclinations and Desires are warm and impetuous, and, like their Blood, on which they very much depend, quickly inflam'd; the World they live in is full of Objects fitted to ferment and set 'em on fire; in short, all things within and without, (if Care be not taken) conspire to ruine and betray them; the Heat of their Imagination hurries them on, and will not suffer them to make a Stand, that they may coolly consider their Danger, and enter into all the Reflections, necessary to the Exactness of their Conduct: For which Reason 'tis requisite that Rules and Measures of Acting be form'd to their Hands, and that they be very particular; these they may have the Leisure to read, and the Review will cost them no great Trouble, but to draw them out in order for themselves, (no one assisting them) if it be not beyond their Capacity, would too much fatigue and vex their Patience. Upon such
Views

Views as these it is that I compos'd the following Essay, which, I can be Witness, was honestly design'd, and, should the Success be but answerable to the Goodness of the Intention, it will be no little Satisfaction.

It's easie to observe there are certain Passions and Qualities belonging to every *Age*, and which form its peculiar *Character*. Covetousness is the Vice of *Old-Men*; an immoderate and unwearied Concern to raise their Fortunes and greaten their Families is a common Fault of the *Middle-Aged*; and the *Younger Sort* are distinguish'd chiefly by their violent Love of Pleasure, of *Sensual Worldly Pleasure*. Pleasure is indeed the Idol of the Young, to which all things else are sacrific'd; 'tis made a kind of Business, they devote themselves entirely to it, and live as if they had nothing to do but gratify a vain extravagant Humour. They are apt to think themselves a sort of priviledg'd Persons whom the Prohibition of Pleasure does not reach, Imagine, the Vigour and Gayety of their Age,

Age, the Strength of their Inclinations, and the quick Relish they have of Pleasure, are so many Probabilities they were made on purpose for it, and will bear them out in all the Liberties they take.

Now, I acknowledge, Pleasure does much better become the Vivacity of Youth than the Languor and Gravity of Age, and that Degree of Pleasure a young Man might innocently enough enjoy, an old Man could not give himself to without a Breach of Decency. But let not the Young therefore fantasie, they have a Toleration to go what Length they please; if Youth be not forbid the Enjoyment of Pleasure, yet in this Enjoyment it is to keep within the Bounds of Religion and Vertue. It is an ill *Character* in any one, (be his Age what it will,) to be a *Lover of Pleasure more than a Lover of GOD*.

The Pleasures of Sense are of two kinds; some are in themselves unlawful, and absolutely forbidden us, as *Fornication, Uncleanneſs, &c.* Here we do not say the Desire is to be temper'd and moderated,

moderated, but quite suppress'd ; nothing less will suffice.

The Pleasures of this sort are so gross and defiling, so opposite to the Design of Christianity, to that Purity of Heart it requires from all who profess it, and tend so directly to undermine the Principles of natural Religion, that the Reason and Understanding of young People themselves, as inconsiderable as they are, blush at 'em ; and if at any Time they make bold with them it is not that they are ignorant of the Guilt and Pollution that cleave to such Carnal Gratifications. I shall therefore pass over the Pleasures of this kind, as carrying their own Condemnation with them ; and proceed to consider the second Sort of Pleasures that are in themselves, and abstracting from the Abuses made of them, lawful and allow'd, and which therefore within certain Restrictions and Limitations may be lawfully desir'd.

The Danger here is the greater, because, not being apprehensive of it, we grow careless and secure. The Object is, in general, Harmless and Inoffensive,
and

and that satisfies us, not reflecting that the Desire of an *innocent Object* may be Culpable thro' its Excess or some other Irregularity attending it.

Amongst the Particulars of this Sort of Pleasure I shall confine my self at present to the Head of *Diversions*, because a Subject the least worn of any.

With these young Persons are generally in Love to the Height of *Fondness*; which as it is an Extreme on the one Hand, so it would not be a less on the other to lay them under an absolute Restraint as to these things, for neither does *Religion* require this, nor will the present State of *human Nature* bear it, which soon breaks if always kept at full Bent.

By *Diversions* here I mean a sort of Medium between Sloth and Business, Actions that take us off from the main Occupations of Life, and are not, in themselves consider'd, of any Use, but only as they prepare for others. Now it is possible to erre by giving either too much or too little, and both are alike prejudicial; a Faculty never us'd grows rusty, and when continually in Use wears out.

So

So that 'tis really no Advantage to our general ^{or} ~~and~~ particular Calling to be engag'd in it without Interruption ; we tire under our Burthen, and dispatch but a little Way in a great deal of Time ; whereas, a seasonable *Diversion* would give us fresh Heart, and be like oiling the Wheels, which makes them move the more pleasantly, and with the greater Speed : Besides all which, it escapes no one, that when a Person is tied down to a thing and cannot have a Loose from it now and then, it tends to disgust him against it. Religion its self, however lovely and amiable it be, will look frightful and terrible to a young Person that is oblig'd to be alway poring on it, and the Duties of it (which, when perform'd by the Soul in a devout and animated Temper, affords so much Pleasure) will become extremely irksome and tedious, if they return too often, or be drawn out too long. *Diversions*, therefore, are necessary for Youth, (and I fear in some Degree for more staid Persons) but the Misery is, they never say 'tis enough ; they should be allow'd to manage their Recreations after their

own Way did they know how to observe a Measure ; but generally, when left to their own Discretion they exercise no Conscience in the Matter: Give me Leave, therefore, to prescribe you some *prudential Rules* for the better Regulation of your Diversions. Of these some regard the *Choice* of your Diversions, and the Circumstances directly relating to them ; others more immediately concern the *Desire* ; and others the actual *Use* and *Enjoyment*.

As for the Choice of your Diversions, *First*, Be sure they be such as are allowable. Learn to divert thy self without Offence to thy own, or the Conscience of thy Neighbour. Let not that good old Maxim be forgotten, *In Matters of a disputable Nature the safer Side is to be chosen* ; it's doubted whether or no thou can'st lawfully play at a certain Game, but no one doubts but thou mayest lawfully let it alone ; in Prudence, therefore, forbear, for why should'st thou play away thy Soul, a thing too precious to be stak'd against the Monarchy of the World : Diversions enough are to be found unquestionably

questionably Innocent ; and what Folly is it then to venture on such as will admit of an Objection ? And 'tis the Opinion of very good Divines, that all Games of Chance are of this Number. Monsieur *Fleury* thinks Play was absolutely unknown to the Jews, seeing we do not find the Name once mention'd in Scripture ; and even to this Day the *Arabians* and other Eastern People play not at Games of Hazard, at least not by the Allowance of their * Law. This is certain, they are more liable to Abuse than others, and offer more Opportunities and Temptations to cheat. When a Person that is a kind of Professor in Gaming shall play with all the Skill he is master of, and meer Chance shall give the Game to another who hath little Insight into the Matter, it's a strong Provocation to recover the Game by some knavish Trick. Old Players fantasie they have a Sort of Right to win, and if it may not be done by fair Means, they'll do it by foul. You'll say if others abuse a thing, that's no

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Reason

* *Maurs des Israelites* pt. 2d. C. 13.

Reason why I should be deny'd the Use of it; I have play'd, and found it no such Snare to me. But let me ask thee, what has been thy Security? Hath it not been restraining *Grace*? If so, have a Care ~~then~~^{out} do not trespass too far. But let it be suppos'd, there is no more Danger to thee from one than from another Diversion, yet by thy Example thou dost encourage others that will prove too weak for the Temptation; and is it imaginable, thou can'st knowingly occasion Sin in another, meerly because thou wilt not abstain from an unnecessary Action, and be altogether Blameless? Yet more, it is to be consider'd that, in judging of the Lawfulness of a Diversion, I ought not to be concluded by my single Opinion, contrary to the Sense of other pious and good People. Tho' my *Judgment* is not to be determin'd by theirs, but by the Evidence of the thing, yet I humbly conceive, it is but fit their *Judgment* should have some Influence on my *Practice*. Charity obliges me to show so much Regard to the Peace of a Fellow-Christian not to grieve him by doing an
Action

Action he thinks displeasing to GOD, and which might be as well omitted; and then, I would propose it to your further Thoughts, whether it be not a Duty to stand more upon our Reputation than to part with any Portion of it for the sake of a Diversion; and whether we ought not to value more the Esteem of good Christians than to forfeit it rather than forego a particular Way of recreating ourselves. We must be all aware that with whomsoever an ill Opinion of us prevails, by alienating their Minds from our Persons it will disable us for doing any great good to them; and think again whether it can be justifiable for a Man, out of an unreasonable Bigottry to any play, to cut himself off from a Part of his Usefulness in the World. With all this, remember St. Paul's Exhortation, *Phil. 4. 8.* Where among other Marks and Characters of those things that he commends to our Practice, this is one, *That they be of good Report*, tho' I deferr not so much to Opinion and Custom as to think they can alter the intrinsic Nature of Actions, so that Vertue shall become Vice, or Vice Vertue,

Vertue, (as the incautious Expressions of some Men would almost tempt one to believe they did,) yet I can't forbear being of the Mind, that an Action in its self Indifferent may become by Accident Sinful, when stamp'd with an ill Name by general Suffrage, or by a Number of conscientious Christians.

There is one thing more which, tho' hinted at before, deserves to be a more particular Subject of your Thoughts. Tho' a Diversion be in its self undoubtedly lawful, and moreover be not scrupled by any one.; Yet is not this alone sufficient to warrant me in the Use of it, unless it be such too as I can use with Safety. There is a great Variety in the Tempers of Men, and this makes that a Temptation to one which is not so to another. Now if upon Examination I find that this or that Diversion hath more than once drawn me into Sin, hath engag'd my Passions too far, or otherwise ensnar'd me, it is to me *forbidden Fruit*. I pray that GOD would not *lead me into Temptation*, and can I then allowably run my self into it?

Secondly,

Secondly, In your Choice of Diversions prefer those that will best answer their *End*. This, I doubt, is but little minded by the *most*, who take the Diversions that are next at Hand, or which the Company vote for, or to which they are led by pure Humour, nay often which meer Chance has thrown them upon. Not a Thought is laid out this Way, tho' there be Room for the Exercise of Reason in this as well as in Cases of greater Moment. I own, that as trifling in things serious is a Fault, so, to be serious in Trifles is a Folly, whereupon, you may suspect, it would be downright Jestings with your Reason to employ it in stating the Nature and Differences of Diversions: But, how much soever this may look like trifling, it may sometimes happen to have very serious Consequences, and, by not consulting your own Temper, nor the Quality of the Remedy, it is not only possible to miss of the End that every reasonable Man ought to design in his Diversions, but to turn them into Instruments of Mischief. The general End of Diversions is, by invigorating
Nature,

Nature, and providing her with fresh Recruits of Spirit, to fit her for better and more chearful Service; from whence it follows that all too violent and intense Exercises that exhaust the Spirits, overstrain our Powers, and crack the Sinews of the Constitution, are heedfully to be shunn'd. The particular and immediate End is, either to retrieve the Mind under Melancholy, and then some Diversion that will amuse the Thoughts at the same Time that it employs the Body is best; or to cure it of a Fit of Dulness, and then bodily Exercise prudently manag'd will be of Use, leaving the Thoughts to rest themselves, I mean, as to any vigorous and close Application; or lastly, the End propos'd is the Health and Vigour of the Animal Part, and in this Case likewise a gentle and agreeable Motion is most proper: But your own Prudence will easily direct you here; I just mention these things to convince you that *Discretion* is to be us'd, that a thoughtless and promiscuous Choice of *Recreations*, without making any Distinction between them, is highly absurd. You will all grant me,

me, it is not Indifferent what are the Ends we propose in our Diversions, for being rational Creatures we are to have some rational Aim in all our Actions, not excepting those of the lowest Rank; and if Reason is to sway us in the Choice of our *End*, it would be Nonsense to lay it aside in the Choice of the *Means*. A Man makes himself less ridiculous by levelling at a mean contemptible End, than by fixing on an important and good Design, and pursuing it by Means which he spends not one Moment to consider whether they are adapted or not adapted to their End.

These two Rules may suffice for the *Choice* of your Diversions themselves. The *Circumstances* relating to them are next to be consider'd, namely, *Time*, *Place* and *Company*.

First, Let your Diversions be well-tim'd. Don't think of diverting yourselves when there is no need for it, and more serious Affairs demand your Application. Remember Recreations are to get you new Strength, not to consume that you have already. *To every thing*
C (saith

(saith the Wiseman) *there is a Season, and a Time to every Purpose under the Heav'n; a Time to weep and a Time to laugh, a Time to mourn and a Time to dance*; and not a little depends upon a nice Observation of these Times. Some Seasons require Respite, the Spirits are extremely dull and flaggy, or employ'd by Nature in her *Mechanical Operations*, and he that at such Times shall call them off, and put them on close study and thinking is not only an ill Husband of his Health, but an ill Manager of Business; for, let his Art be what it will, he must expect to make but sorry Musick when the Instrument is out of Tune. On the contrary, when all is spritely and serene within, and Soul and Body both are in good Humour, let us lay hold of the Opportunity, and as the *Proverb* directs, *Make Hay while the Sun shines*. We are now capable of doing things with Ease and Dispatch, and it will be greatly to misplace our Activity to bestow it wholly on our play. We should rather look on it as an Invitation from Providence to mind our Work. And ought accordingly

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ly to improve it to this End. This holds in a more special Manner with those, who seldom know a clear Sky ; let such double their Diligence when Nature smiles, and make their Advantage of the kind Fit.

Secondly, Let the *Place* you chuse for your Diversions be unexceptionable. You are not ignorant that the Law bars you from *Publick-Houses* ; and what is it better than a Contempt of the *National Authority*, to frequent them notwithstanding ? There is not, it's true, that Care taken in the Execution of the Law as might be wish'd, yet the Obligation to Obedience is still the same. If the Ministers of the Law neglect to discharge their Duties, the Law does not thereupon lose its binding Force which it deriv'd from a higher Fountain, for we are to be in Subjection *Not only for Wrath, but Conscience Sake*. Let it not be pleaded that you are not within the Design of the *Statute*, which was purely to prevent the Idleness of labouring People, that they might not spend their Time and Money at the *Ale-House*, when the Necessities

cessities of their Families call'd for it ; for granting this to have been the main Intent of the Law, yet, foreseeing this End could not otherwise be effected, our Legislators have wisely made this Prohibition general, so that 'tis expected from you that you carefully fly such forbidden Ground, if not for your own Sakes, for the Sake of your poor Neighbour. And this Reason, on which the Law is founded, would make a Distinction of Places, tho' we should suppose the Law to have left them indifferent. The ill Consequences of your haunting Houses of ill *Fame* are notorious : Many of the poorer Idlers will take Countenance from your Example, and escape unpunish'd. The *Rank* and *Condition* you hold will fright the Officers from meddling with you, and, that they may not be thought partial, they will leave other Offenders to go unmolested, and thus more Families than one shall come to want Bread by your Means : Besides which, there is personal Danger in the Case ; Liquor must be call'd for, and when brought will, no Doubt, be dispos'd of the common Way,
till

'till at last you are got within a just Suspicion of having drank more than is sufficient. I may add, that first ^{or} ~~and~~ last, you run the Hazard, of falling into bad Company, of which there is seldom a Scarcity at such Places; and this minds me of the third thing.

Thirdly, Take heed with whom you divert your selves, for 'tis of more Consequence than you're aware who the Persons are you make your Partners. Avoid those that are given to Passion, *For an angry Man stirreth up Strife, Prov. 29. 22.* It is odds but he'll find an Occasion to quarrel before you part, and then farewell to all the Pleasure and Harmony of the Conversation: So that the Love of Pleasure, which Youth is so much govern'd by, should teach Caution here. But the worst is, by herding with Persons of this Character, a Man takes to their ill Qualities, as 'tis natural for one Flame to be kindled at another, and Brawls and Scuffles become so familiar that he insensibly slides into them, when in more civil Company. Let me further press this Advice by the Authority of Solomon, *Prov.*

22. 24, 25. *Make no Friendship with an angry Man, and with a furious Man thou shalt not go*; and the Reason he adds is the same with that I just now mention'd, *viz. Lest thou learn his Way and get a Snare to thy Soul*. Neither let a Man of *corrupt Morals* share thy Recreations, be his Temper the best in the World; nay, for this very Reason shun him the more carefully. The Smoothness of his Behaviour, and his sweet insinuating Humour will but make the Poison of his Example go down the more glibly. May this persuade thee to be upon thy Guard, and wisely consider thy Danger. An accidental Meeting at a Diversion hath sometimes been the Foundation of a lasting Acquaintance; a natural Goodness of Temper often fatally recommends a wicked Man, and from an Endearment for his Person we easily pass to a liking of his Vices. And will it be any Mitigation of my Misery, should I perish by this Means, that a good temper'd Man was the Instrument of my Ruine? So much for the Choice of your Diversions, and the Circumstances relating to them.

I come now to the *second Thing* propos'd, to give you those Directions that more immediately concern the *Desire* :

First, Let your Desires be cool and temperate, for thus only can they be Regular. The several Degrees of Desire should be always match'd by equal Degrees of Worth and Significancy in the Object ; and where that is something of a low Concern, it is a shame if it kindle a raging Passion. Would not a Man betray a childish Folly that should be eagerly bent upon hunting down a *Butter-fly* ? The Meanness of his Spirit is not much less, that is earnest and impatient for some little Diversion. Let us take up that wise Resolution of *St. Paul* not to be *brought under the Power of any*. Is it fit, Sirs, I should govern my Desires, or that my Desires should govern me ? You'll say, that I should govern my Desires ; for being mine, my Right and Property, I may justly exercise that Dominion Nature hath given me over them. Well, let me ask you again, is it fit Reason should govern Desire, or Desire govern Reason ? This Question, which you may think harder

to

to be solv'd than the former, is in Effect the very same, for 'tis Reason makes the Man, and if a Man rule his Desires it must be by the Mediation of his Reason. Wherefore, if the Desires of things of an inferiour Nature be restless and vehement, not being in Subjection to Reason they are no longer in their natural State, they are undue and exorbitant. And then to make you yet more cautious how you suffer such Desires to take head, consider as they get Strength Reason loses it, and they are always most craving where there is the greatest Impotence or Disorder of the Understanding, as in *Children* and *Mad-folks*. But if hasty and inordinate Desires of Diversions, and such like Trifles, argue a Weakness of *Reason*, they show yet more plainly a Defect in *Religion*. A Soul full of the Spirit of Christianity hath a sort of Indifference for all that is in the World, and tho' it needs the Use of these things sometimes, yet it is not glued to them; whereas he whose Desires towards any thing here below are loud and importunate, is tied fast to it, and consequently hangs the
looser

looser from GOD. When the Strength and Spirits of the Mind are wasted on other Matters, nothing but Indifference and Lukewarmness are left for Objects of a religious Concern: As, you may observe, those Trees that run out into Abundance of grosser *Shoots* seldom bear much *Fruit*, because all the best Juices go to maintain those useless Luxuriances.

You need not be inform'd when your Desire of Diversions is intemperate; if it push you forward to a too frequent Enjoyment of them; if you are continually in Quest of new ones; if more pressing Affairs are ordinarily made to stoop when they lie in the Way of your Diversions; if having resolv'd upon a Diversion, and the Weather or some Accident prevent you, you are peevish and out of Humour, vex'd with the Occasion that detains you, or sullenly idle away your Time rather than you'll apply yourselves to Business; if these are the Effects of your Desires, they are so very bad that you may well conclude the Cause not to be very good.

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Secondly;

Secondly, Be not very desirous of excelling in any Game or Exercise; for besides that this shows a mean Taste, and a wrong Judgment of things, as if Skill and Mastery at the Plays and Occupations of Children (for in truth all the petty Methods we take to please and flatter *human Life* are no better; as if, I say, these little things) were greatly to be coveted; besides that it diverts us from aiming at that *Wisdom that is from above*, and the heav'nly Skill of glorifying GOD, and managing our *high Calling* to the noblest Purposes; besides all these Disadvantages attending it, it hath likewise these unhappy Consequences, that it engages us oftener than is decent in the favourite Diversion; 'till we have attain'd the Dexterity and the Knowledge we desire, it fills us with Vexation if after all we do not succeed at it, and will be a Temptation, should we master it, to follow it too close, and spend too much of our Time at it, either that we may make a Penny of our Art, or out of a silly Vanity to let others see our extraordinary Talent at it.

I proceed now in the *third Place* to lay before you such Rules and Directions as regard the *Use and Enjoyment* of your Diversions.

First, Beg of GOD that he would preside over your Diversions, that he would fortify you by his Grace against the *Temptations* that may assault you, teach you *Moderation* in the Use of them, and the wise Art of making them subservient to Religion; in a Word, that he would add this *Blessing* to them for the enlivening and refreshing your Spirits. I would not be thought to mean that such a formal Address ought immediately to preceed every Diversion, tho' I see no Harm in it, if it did; but what I mean is that in your private Prayers among other Petitions you would not omit to mention sometimes the Regulation of your Diversions, that as they are innocent in their *Nature*, they may also prove innocent in their *Use*. And there is no doubt but you will do this, if duely sensible of the Need you stand in of the divine Presence, that the most harmless Food may kill where he does not mercifully prevent,

or, plainly, that we cannot be concern'd about the World, tho' in the most simple and unforbidden Instances, with absolute Safety ; there is nothing but the Devil may mingle his Temptations with, and, when we dream of no Danger near, convey Poison into our Cup of Pleasure ; which should be a Reason with us to beg of GOD to direct and restrain us, to hedge round our Way, and enable us to recreate our selves with Innocence and Safety.

Secondly, Bless GOD your Circumstances in the World are such as to allow of needful and moderate Diversions : I say those that are *needful*, for, really, to be in a Condition that would lay us under a Temptation to pass away the Whole of Life in one enchanted Circle ~~and~~ continued Variation of them, is what no one would desire that knows what makes for his true Interest ; as, on the other side, it is not the most happy State of Life to be confin'd to a perpetual Drudgery of Business, just to supply the Necessities of Nature. If there be not an Opportunity to unbend and relax by Intervals, and taste
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the Sweets of Life, we find in our selves a strong Inclination to repine, and are the more apt to exceed Bounds whenever we enjoy a Vacancy. We have therefore great Reason to be thankful if *Agur's* wise Choice be our Lot, not to have either *Poverty* or *Riches*. Our Religion is no Enemy to convenient Recreations, and if herein our Condition agree with our Religion, and will admit of them too, it is indeed a Mercy. While we cheer and exhilarate our selves, and the Springs of Life have a new Force and Briskness put into them, and our secret Powers are dispos'd to act with greater Pleasure, let not the Goodness of our most bountiful Creator be unminded, who permits us to relieve our Weariness, and supplies us with the Means and Capacities of doing it, and is pleas'd to see us lightn'd and animated by our Recreations, provided we do not transgress the inviolable Rules of Vertue and Sobriety.

Thirdly, In Case you play for *Money*, let the Sum be inconsiderable, and no more than you would contentedly lose. Where the Stakes run high, 'tis no longer

a Diversion, a calm and pleasing Amusement, but endangers your Repose. The whole Soul is in an uneasie Suspence while the Game is depending, the Thoughts variously agitated, and Hope and Fear by Turns possess you ; and thus what was design'd to invigorate, tires and torments you, and dispirits you to a greater Degree than Business it self would have done. Should you lose, not to mention the Vexation it will give you, you'll scarce be able to forbear playing on, to retrieve your *Loss* ; tho' instead of that it often happens that you throw more after. Should you win, it only serves to draw you in further, makes you willing to double the Stake ; and lur'd with the flattering Hope of bettering your *good Luck*, as you call it, lose perhaps twice the Sum you had gotten. In short, win or lose, the Inconvenience is much the same, and either Way you become addicted to gaming ; and to this Cause, I make no Doubt, we ought to ascribe that vehement Passion for Play that we see in certain Persons, who are never satisfied any longer than while they are at it,
nor

nor indeed then. They play the oftener because they play for Money, and by often playing they contract an habitual Inclination that is continually importuning them. It cannot pass for an Excuse, that you have Money to spare, for it's a Mistake to think you have so very much to spare for idle Diversions. Say you can spare what you play for at first, you are induc'd at long run to play for more than you can spare. Hast thou Bread and to spare? Be thankful to GOD for this overplus, and shew thine is real Charity by feeding his Poor. Does *thy Cup overflow*? It's pity any thing should be wasted when there are so many would be glad of it to allay their Thirst. It is a dangerous Errour, tho' but too common, that what is more than enough to supply our Needs, and the Needs of those Nature has oblig'd us to provide for, is perfectly at our own Disposal, and may be lavish'd away at Discretion; whereas indeed we are no more than GOD's *Treasurers*, and must account for all that we receive; our superfluous Wealth is Part of the Publick Stock, and we are guilty of great Mismanagement

management to embezel it, and lay it out on our private Occasions; I would say, when there is no Occasion.

Fourthly, Be very sparing of your Diversions. Tho' I said, not long since, that there are some Occasions proper to relax in, you must not presently fantasie that whenever you feel a Reluctance to work, and the Mind is a little wandring and dissipated, you have a sufficient Pretence to seek your Cure in some Diversion; for this Backwardness does often arise not from your being unfit but unaccustom'd to Labour, and with a little Trouble your Thoughts might be recollected, and after you were once set in the Work would proceed successfully enough. Besides, the barely changing our Business, might be made many Times to supply the Place of Diversion, and the Mind weary and sick of one Set of Thoughts would find its Repose in another; the Secret of this is, that it cannot bear to be long in Company with the same Object, you must feed it with Variety if you would keep it from languishing. In this it resembles the Eye that loves not to gaze
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for any long while together upon the most beautiful Picture, without once looking off; it is the Liberty to vary its Objects that gratifies it most. I believe there is scarce a *Student* but can tell us from his own Experience, that after having meditated himself into a dozy heartless Frame, the reading a delightful Piece of *History* hath awaken'd him, and put him into a new *Vein* for Contemplation.

Real Occasions for Diversion ⁿthere are not so frequent as you are willing to believe, and consequently your Diversions ought not to be many and thick sown. The Multitude of Diversions is extremely prejudicial, and the Symptom of a vain and sensual Disposition. In a Life full of these airy Pleasures what room is there for the Mortification and self Denial of a Christian? A too quick Succession of them sensualizes the Heart, and unites it too strongly to the World, it makes you over fond of Life, and afraid of Death; it weakens the Influence of heavenly things; for how can it be that our Aspirations to the Joys above should be very
E ardent

ardent at the Time we are so entirely possess'd of worldly Delights? It emaculates the Spirits, and so softens the Mind that it sinks under Adversity; 'tis by *voluntary Austerities* a Man hardens himself against *the Day of Trouble*, and is able to bear up against those Shocks of Providence from which no one is secure: Whereas Diversions too often repeated unbrace the Nerves of the Soul, and enfeeble its Powers, and finally render us averse to the severer Exercises of Religion and Vertue. These are all natural Consequences of a Life abandon'd to Sports and Pastimes, the serious Thought of which should make us sober and reserv'd in the Use of them.

Fifthly, Let not your Diversions be too long and entrench upon your precious Time; as for certain they do when so much of the Day is allotted them that you're forc'd to crowd together in Haste your Devotions and Business, that they may come within the Compass of the little that is left, or perhaps, wholly neglect them. He is to be commended that knows when to leave off, who having
stop'd

stop'd and breath'd a while, and taken necessary Refreshment, pursues his Journey with fresh Vigour and Alacrity, and does not, as some others, make a tedious Stay at every *baiting* Place. Diversions in Life are not altogether unlike *Digressions* in a Book, things mighty serviceable to an *Author*, they relieve him in the Want of Matter, and, which is yet better, swell the Bulk and the Price of his Book; neither, if discreetly husbanded, are they unacceptable to the *Reader*; but if spun out to an unreasonable Length, they take up much more Room than the main Subject, we conclude the Author to have a wrong Idea of Digressions, or a very mean one of his Readers. The Business of Life, setting aside the Time that runs off in convenient Sleep and Repose, ordinarily claims the biggest Portion of the Remainder; and in Case your *usual* Diversions fill a larger Space they are monstrous and unsizable, as those overgrown Digressions mention'd before. Time is a most valuable Talent, and the more valuable in that Eternity depends on it, and you had best think a little how

you will be able to answer it at the last Day, should you be prodigal of this Treasure, and squander it away in needless Diversions, Diversions that are lov'd not so much upon their own Account (for their Length is really tedious) as because they serve to pass away Time.

Sixthly, Let not your *Mind* and *Heart* be too far engag'd in a Diversion. To hug a Diversion so close argues the Affection to be prepossess'd more than is becoming, and is an Indication of a light and frothy Soul. An infallible Sign of this eager Application to Diversion is refusing to leave it when some occasional Business summons you away; and as this is a Sign of a too intense Pursuit of Diversion so is it evidently a Reason against it, for whatsoever tends not to make a Diversion preparatory to Business, but a Let and a Hindrance, must needs be an Abuse of it, and inconsistent with the Laws of *Temperance*; much as if I should use a Remedy for a Distemper, and take so great a Dose of it as to encrease my Illness.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, Look not on Diversion as an *End*, but use it as a *Means*. Let Diversion be for the Sake of Business, not Business minister to Diversion, which I fear is the common Method of the World, whose principal Motive to Work is either that they may get wherewith to supply their Diversions, or that by *Variety* they may give a *Poignancy* and *Relish* to them, or be able to divert themselves without Censure ; these are the *Views* that animate them, and make Business supportable ; not the Thought that they are now doing their *Duty*, obeying GOD, and serving their *Generation*. On the contrary in their Use of Recreation they look no further, they rest here as in their *End*, and the thing that chiefly endears it is the slight superficial Pleasure it gives, not its Fitness to revive them, and beget a new Appetite and Capacity for Business, that so they may glorify GOD by a vertuous Industry. Should they deny this, they will never be believ'd, as long as they envy Persons of *Quality* for the pleasureable Life they lead, and account them the happiest People on Earth because

cause they can be continually diverting themselves, and not have such heavy Reflections pass'd upon them, as they should for taking the same *Liberties*. What can be a plainer Argument than this, that they take Diversion to be the great *End* of *Life*? A Notion that is confuted by the very Name, for a *Diversion* is so call'd from its interrupting our principal Concern; according to which Etymology should we suppose it our great Happyness to mind chiefly our Diversions, (where our Circumstances allow of it,) what we now term Business would most properly go under the Name of Diversion.

'Tis not impossible that *young Gentlemen* (if any such happen to read this small Essay) when they look on this, and some of the foregoing Particulars, will pass them over hastily, without making any Application to themselves, fancying they are not the Persons concern'd. The Frequency and Length of Diversions, and the not subordinating them to more *manly* and *grave* Occupations, may be a Fault in those of meaner Quality, but in them they bespeak a *Freedom* and *Gallantry* of Spirit,

Spirit, and are a sort of Rights and Immunities belonging to their great Birth and Fortune. If they must make Conscience how they spend their Time, what Advantage have they above others? What is a great Estate good for but to maintain the Owner in a soft, idle and luxurious Way of Living? How else shall he distinguish himself from the trading Part of the World? In earnest, this is such sorry reasoning that I am loath to suppose a Man of any Sense capable of it. A Gentleman, I hope, does not reckon himself above the Laws of right Reason and the Commands of the Gospel. He is equally a Subject of GOD Almighty, every whit as accountable for his Actions; and his Time is a *Talent* it concerns him to improve, no less than other Men. Alas, Sirs! *Figure, Estate and Title* are poor empty things; thus much you learn from the Example of our LORD who refus'd them all when in his Power. Because they daze a vain unthinking Crowd, is it imaginable they should weigh so much with the Great GOD, that he will exempt you from the common Duties

Duties of human Nature? Did our Bleſſed Maſter lead a laborious and painful Life? And can any that are call'd his Diſciples think it beneath them to ſet to any thing that hath but the Face of Buſineſs? To ask, how a Gentleman ſhall diſtinguiſh himſelf if not by his Pleaſures? is a ſcandalous Queſtion; and might with as good Grace be alter'd into this other Queſtion, How he ſhall be diſtinguiſh'd from other Men, but by being leſs reaſonable than they? If he muſt be differenc'd from the reſt of the World, there are much more creditable Methods for it than this that is commonly taken. Let him affect to lead the Way in brave and vertuous Actions, and to excell in *uſeful Learning*, for which laſt he hath manifeſtly the Advantage of Perſons whoſe Circumſtances are narrower; ſuch Accompliſhments will brighten his *Character*, and becauſe of the Eminence of his Station appear ſooner and dart their Light and Influence further, than it's poſſible they ſhould in a lower Sphere. For a Man to plead his Eſtate as his *Patent* for being careleſs and negligent, is ſuch a
Piece

Piece of *Effrontery*, that nothing can be more. Let the Servant he pays the greatest Wages to, alledge that for a Reason of his gadding abroad, and doing less than his Fellows; What Answer must he expect? *Mutato nomine, de te fabula narratur.*

Hast thou so much of the World that thou dost not know of any use for it, unless it be to furnish thy Pleasures? Let not this long disturb thee; Thy Wealth is not so unweildy, but there are enough who would willingly take off the parings of it; The *Poor* and the *Needy* are *always with you*. I would fain believe no young Gentleman, to excuse his useless Unprofitable manner of Life, will pretend, he is at a loss how to employ himself, that his Time lies upon his Hands, and he had as good give it all to Recreation, as Consume it in doing nothing. Should any one talk at this Rate, he must strangely forget himself; for where's the Consequence, that because he would avoid doing nothing, he is forc'd upon doing that which is to no Purpose? The first Years of a Gentleman's Life (after his Reason
F begins

begins to display it self) are usually spent at the publick Schools, and there he cannot want for Business to take him up. Let him get into the Acquaintance of the best Authors, and by them labour Continually in *cultivating* his *Mind* and *Manners*, and he will find the Fragments of Time that remain over and above are not so very Considerable. But ah! how seldom is this done! Young Men that are Born to Estates miserably neglect their Studies; as if Learning look'd too Pedantic in a Gentleman, or as if they should suck in enough of it by only breathing in the *College Air*, tho' I dare say they would never consent their dear Bodies should be put off with such thin Diet. Hence proceeds an Ignorance that has been the Scandal of so many of our Gentry, and has made it wish'd they would ne'er travel to give Foreigners so poor an Idea of the Sense and Learning of the English Nation. And doubtless, this Ignorance is a principal Reason of the Corruption of the present Age, more particularly of the Vices of the Tongue. Gentlemen would fain be Remarkable
for

for something, and despairing to pass for Men of Sober and solid Sense, set up for *Men of Wit*, that is for Men that can make a Jest of Damnation; for in truth, he alone is thought the Witty Man that can say extravagant things, and treat his *Maker* with the same Coarseness and Freedom that he would his *Footman*. Yea, so fashionable is the profane Humour grown, that, (GOD forgive us) 'tis almost become a set Diversion, a Diversion I confess I did not mention in Discourfing of the Choice of Diversions, because so very bad that every one must see the Evil of it, so very bad indeed that the Devil himself cann't invent a worse. In short, (that I may return from this little Digression) young Gentlemen will find enough to do to lay in Materials, that they may appear with Honour and Reputation when their *Queen* or *Country* shall call them into the Scene of Action.

Eighthly, Learn *Humility* from your Diversions. The want of them is not, in all likelihood, a necessity of *Original Nature*, but the Effect of Sin. Innocent Man was not liable to that Stupor and

Satiety we so often experience; his Work, properly speaking, was not Labour but Pleasure; his strength could carry him on to his End without resting so often by the way, and whatever Faintness and Lassitude he might at Times fall into, must, I fancy, have been Inconsiderable, and soon remedied by a short Balsamic Sleep. From hence it is, I am inclin'd to think, that part of the *Curse* Gen. 3. 19. *In the Sweat of thy Face shalt thou eat Bread untill thou return to the Ground*, was not only remote, and fell Immediately upon the *Earth*, which being doom'd to Barrenness would put Man to more expence and trouble to cultivate and improve it; but respected Man immediately, and was as much as to say, that he should not only be oblig'd to bestow more Care and Labour upon the Ground, but his work of that and all other kinds should be more Painful and Toilsome, and call for more frequent Diversions. But, however this be, it is out of doubt that our Diversions are marks, if not of our Apostasie, at least of the Imperfection of the present State; for is it Supposable

possible that the *Spirits of Just Men made perfect* are, as we, presently oppress'd by a Contemplation, and, for the sake of Change, can find their Pleasure in *play Games*? You will say, they are at liberty from the Load of *Flesh and Blood* that weighs us down. Very true; but how do you apprehend it will be at the *Resurrection* when the Soul shall be again invested with its Body? shall we then need to trifle some times that we may work at others? no certainly, the Spriteliness and Strength of both parts of our Nature will fit us for continued Exercise, and, being Equal to the Angels, we shall not be subject to that Weakness and to those Infirmities that belong to our present Infant State. Methinks therefore we cannot make a better nor more natural Use of our Diversions than to draw from them an Argument for *Humility*. And if this be the true Use, assuredly, they make a very wrong one of them, whose Diversions are a Reason of their Pride; they despise the Man that maintains himself by an honest Industry, and hath not the ability or the *Inclination* to melt down his
Hours

Hours in foolish Pleasures. But what cannot *Pride* effect? It can build in the Air, or upon that very Ground that is sacred to Humility; and so great is the interest it hath got in Man, that he takes Occasion to be Proud from those things that are the Effects of Sin and ought to humble him. *Nakedness*, as I may say, was the Livery of Innocence; Cloathes had not been known but by the *Fall*, and every Time we dress our selves 'tis strange almost how we can forbear reflecting by that very Action, that we are Apostate Creatures; and yet what hath ministred more to Vanity than Cloaths! I have likewise shown you that the Necessity of Recreations was introduc'd by the Fall; *for* in Men therefore to insult because they divert themselves ev'n more than is Needful, betrays a strong Inclination to Pride, and (abstracting from other Considerations) renders the *Mosaic History* extremely probable, which Acquaints us that our Nature was tainted with this Sin in the Fountain.

To add the greater force and Efficacy to the Directions that have been given, consider the Advantages of *Regularity*.

I glanc'd at several as I pass'd along, but it will not be amiss to Consider more distinctly, *First*, The agreeable Appearance that it makes. Proportion is the very Essence of Beauty and Harmony. The Beauty of a Body lies in the Strict Symmetry of its parts, and a fine Air and Colour spread over the whole, and the Beauty of *Humane Life* consists in a due Proportion and Correspondence of the several parts with one another, and of all together with the Law of right Reason. Where the Shrill and Airy, and the more solemn Sounds do jointly assist to the Harmony, the Musick fails not to please a discerning Ear; when the *Lights* and the *Shades* in a Picture are judiciously mingled, the Eye confesses its self charm'd at the Sight; and who is there that is not agreeably Surpriz'd to see in a *Youthful Life* the brighter and the graver Scenes orderly plac'd, and manag'd by an exact Prudence?

Secondly, Reflect on the *Credit* that attends good *Management* in Diversions, a Temperance that restrains from the grosser Instances of sensual Pleasure is not without

out its Praise in a young Man, because the contrary is so very Common in our Times, and the Fever of Youth does seem a little to excuse those Extravagant Sallies; how reputable then must be a Temperance that descends ev'n to the Inspection and Government of his Recreations? It shows his Reason to be staunch and firm, that there is a Principle within him Superior to Sense and Fancy, which hath the Mastery of his Desires, and can be cool and sedate amidst warm and clamorous Passions; it bespeaks present Applause, and encourages great Hopes and Expectations of the Future. The *Gentleman* that has prefer'd his private Business to his Diversions may with the greater Confidence be entrusted with publick Affairs by his Prince or Country, secure that he will not Neglect them for his Pleasures; The *Scholar* that hath stuck close to his Studies will be reckon'd well furnish'd and prepar'd for the Employment he engages in, and the *Tradesman* who has minded his Shop will be thought to be Master of his Trade, the World will Judge him in a fair way to thrive,
and

and so if he wants a Stock to begin with he shall have Credit enough almost to supply it. In a Word, all of them, with this *Proviso*, enter upon the *World* with peculiar Advantages.

Thirdly, The *Pleasure* of well-regulated Diversions ought not to be forgotten. Whatever is reasonable will always carry with it its own Regard, for Reason is the proper Nature of Man, his great distinctive Character, and the more natural any thing the more pleasant. The temperate Person feels a more serene and genuine Pleasure both in the *Enjoyment* and in the *Reflection*. *First*, Temperance gives the sincerest Pleasure in the Enjoyment of Diversions; of which there are these two or three obvious Reasons to be assign'd.

First, *Their* not being too common nor lengthened out too far, makes them the more Relishing. It may be remark'd of all the Delights of this World that they pall upon a long Fruition, and, if often repeated, grow flat and tasteless; 'tis *Absence* must recommend the most ingenious Conversation, and two of the best

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Friends

Friends that ever liv'd, after they have been shut up in a Room for several Hours, (unless they have something extraordinary to talk of) will, for the Time, be heartily sick of one anothers Company. On this very Account I have sometimes wondred how so many People can bear a constant *Round* of long-winded Diversions; it cannot be, *sure*, from the mighty Pleasure they find in them; I am perswaded they enjoy less of that than other Men; Monsieur *Pascal* will tell you the true Ground of this; “ In all the tumultuary Business, and in all the trifling Diversions amongst Men, our general Aim is to make the Time pass off our Hands without feeling it, or rather without feeling our selves, and, by getting rid of this small Portion of Life, to avoid that inward Disgust and Bitterness which we should not fail to meet with, did we find the Leisure to descend into our own Breasts.

Secondly, The *temperate* Man enjoys all the Pleasure a Diversion will naturally afford, because he does not look for more; whereas Disappointment is the certain

certain *Fate* of very *positive* Desires, and Fruition gives but little Satisfaction, in regard Fancy had promis'd too much ; the Man is disgusted to find all his gay Hopes so rudely treated, and himself the *Cully* of his *Imagination*. 'Tis advantageous for an Object, when Expectation falls short of it, nor is any one displeas'd to be so mistaken, because the Error contributes to his Happyness ; but when Expectation flies too high 'tis a Mortification to descend again, as it would be for a Guest that had seated himself at the upper End of the Table to be thrust down amongst the meanest of the Company.

Thirdly, Temperance is the Reason that a Person diverts himself with an easie satisfied Mind. Having paid what he owes to his more important Concerns, his Thoughts within are at Rest, he may now venture upon a little harmless Pleasure, and has the Leave of GOD and his Conscience for it. Not so he whose Diversions jostle out the *main Affairs* of Life ; being sent into the World not that he might follow the Conduct of *Humour* and *Fancy*, but to serve his Maker and

be useful to Mankind, he must needs be uneasie for having acted beneath the *Dignity* of his Nature, and the Design of his *Creation*; his Conscience will be apt to tell him he hath no *Right* to Diversions; 'twill upbraid him for having stolen so much Time from his Business, and be continually dunning him for the long Ar-rears that are due. And thus, the Pleasure the *First* takes in a Diversion drinks pure and refin'd, like a Liquor drawn off from its Lees; that of the other is extremely puddled, as Liquor when the Vessel hath receiv'd a great Shake, and the Dregs at Bottom are disturb'd and unsettled. To conclude

Secondly, If the regular Person have the better in the *Enjoyment* of Diversions, much more in the *Reflection*. Memory is not a Torment to him as it is to some others who have Reason to blush every Time they cast their View backward, not seeing any but empty Space void of all substantial Actions, nor having advanc'd in the Knowledge of GOD, of the World, or of themselves; to whom no standing Memorial is left that a rational Being hath

hath liv'd, but only a few Ideas silly and impertinent as the *Images* of a Dream. In short, if a Life possess'd entirely by Diversions be pleasing to think on, it must be when 'tis yet future, not when it is past. On the contrary, Time well spent yields greater Satisfaction in the Reflection than it does in the Prospect; by being past it is secur'd to a Person, and no Accident whatever can alter it: Whereas there is something of Contingency, while it is to come, and many *Temptations* may turn him from his Duty. Besides, he reaps the Fruits of his good *Husbandry*, he finds his very Being better'd and improv'd, and more valuable than it was; to which add, that his chearful Labours and his innocent Mirth encourage him to hope for the Happyness of a better Life.

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*Wisdom the first Spring of Action in
the DEITY.*

A
DISCOURSE,
IN WHICH,
Among other THINGS,
THE

Absurdity of GOD's being acted by
Natural Inclinations, and of an *Unbounded
Liberty*, is shewn.

The *Moral Attributes* of GOD are explain'd.

The *Origin of Evil* is consider'd.

The *Fundamental Duties* of *Natural Religion*
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things, advanc'd by some late authors, and
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